

## CHIRURGEON'S BURDEN

NEWSLETTER FOR AN TIR CHIRURGEONS

ISSUE #7 – August, 2005

Editor: Lianna Stewart, GdS

### What is a Chirurgeon's Job?



It's obvious what a chirurgeon does when the cry "Chirurgeon!!!" goes out across the camp. We grab our kits and go. We do our best to relieve the pain and anxiety of our patient, assess their emergency, and treat within our

skill/cert level. If needed, we call for people with more skills or resources, activating the next step in the chain of life.

Most chirurgeons know more of the job description: having maps to the hospital, knowing what you need to run chi point, the paperwork angle. That's still part of the "first aid station" aspect of chirurgery – being able to treat injuries and illnesses that come to you (even when called to a camp, you're still being summoned to render aid.)

Our job is more than first aid. We get a hint of this at Point, when someone stops by to ask a health question – we're elected "town doc" and people turn to us with all kinds of questions, from where they can get a condom to what we know about a medication vs. herb drug reaction. Be **very** careful to state what you think and that all that's just your opinion, they should look it up or ask a doctor – you know the script. But these interactions serve to remind us that we are more than the first aid station.

We are the people our community has entrusted **not** just with treatment, and **not** just with answering questions; but to be our community's entire health department. We

warn in opening court or town cry about hydration. When we know we're chirurgeon-in-charge ahead of time we can participate in making sure the roads are wide enough for fire trucks, that someone's really verified the site water is drinkable, that known hornet nests, poison oak/ivy, or dangerous water are labeled in site copy or on signs. We unconsciously think in patterns and paths to bring up the health issues when we see them. Others rely on us to do just that.

Sometimes the questions we need to ask, or the facts we need to share will be unpopular. It's inconvenient and requires more work when we must remind people of possible outcomes they'd rather ignore. It requires tact mixed with persistence.

Sometimes we find ourselves thrust into a situation we didn't have time to prepare for; a funnel cloud or a line of smoke or lightning means we have to move quickly to warn the community who trusts us to help them be safe. There may not be time to build consensus, or hammer out a plan. It's our responsibility to make the public health announcement even when it's unpopular – but make it politely. It's always possible to say "My lords and ladies, as your Chirurgeon I advise you to..." and be Safety's herald. You'll be a lot more successful, both in sounding calm and having a good suggestion, if you've thought the scenario through and done some research ahead of time and have good data in your head with which to make a decision when you need it.

At a recent event we had a severe thunderstorm sit right over us. We were blessed with good information – a chirurgeon from the Midwest and another with a weather report function on a cell phone meant we had the information on which to act. Turns out the mnemonic I had since childhood was wrong – flash to bang isn't one mile to a second, it's 5 or 6. We ran out of persuasion time (I've since learned we were already in deeper danger than I knew) and I made an announcement. I became pretty unpopular there for a few minutes, but we did our job: our community was warned.



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Sometimes that is the job, including telling people unpopular things. It's hugely important to use all the courtesy and tact available to you and I know that it may not be much and it may not protect you from a negative reaction – but if there's a genuine hazard and you **don't** warn people the burden of that's a heavy weight – and you'll still have negative reactions on why you didn't say anything.

If you end up needing to step forward like that, know that I'll back it. Do your best to use all the tact in the world, but don't mistake silence when you should speak for tact. Just speak gently and call me within 24 hours and tell me what happened. We **can't** order anyone to do **anything**. Just make a suggestion then visibly model the good behavior you just recommended. If you don't know what to do, see if someone else knows. Don't give advice you don't know just to say something, but there may be a resource available – just like going to higher certs in a treatment situation. (Just don't use a cell phone when there is lightning!)

As for the lightning, I've hit NOAA's site and the National Lightning Safety Institute and a few others. The general recommendation is what they all call the 30-30 rule: 30 seconds or less between flash and bang means you seek cover until 30 minutes after it stops. In much of An Tir we seldom have a storm last that long, but make sure things have cleared up in your vicinity before you announce it's safe – one of the things I've learned is that lightning can strike over 10 miles away from the cloud it starts in – where there's clear sky.

I have spoken with Dame Eleanor, the Chirurgeon General. In fact, she's the one who pointed me to some of those websites and the 30-30 rule. She and the Society Marshal are looking into putting out a guideline for when fighting should stop because we sure could have used one at that event – a young Marshal In Charge found himself in an impossible situation without a standard to fall back on.

I'll be posting some of these sites in the training room on the message board. Let's start a resource for information on these possible emergencies, so we can all know a bit about them.

In service- to Physic, All-Heal, Hygienia, and you:

THLord Tvorimir Danilov, MC, GdS, W.O.A.W.  
Kingdom Chirurgeon, An Tir

### Chirurgeon spotting!



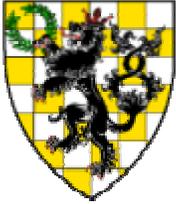
The Honorable Lady Adrianna  
MacAverr, Journeyman  
Chirurgeon.



Lord Urii Romanovich,  
Journeyman Chirurgeon



Lady Patricia MacAndrew, Master Chirurgeon



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### Dental First Aid for Chirurgeons

It's Crown Tournament and you are Chirurgeon in Charge. The Tournament has gone well, and you have been bored all day. As you watch the semifinals, you see Duke Rhino Hide hit Sir Robert the Handsome right in the grill of his helm. Sir Robert's chin strap was



worn, but the marshals passed it anyway. With Duke Rhino's hit, the strap broke and the helm was forced right into Sir Robert's nose and mouth. The Marshals call "Hold!" and, horrified, Sir Robert realizes that he is now missing a front tooth and is bleeding profusely from his mouth and nose. "Chirurgeon!" he screams. The Marshall calls you onto the field. What do you do?

Unfortunately, the above scenario is based on a true story. Dental injuries in the SCA are more common than most chirurgeons think. The most common injury is described above, whether the tooth is completely knocked out or only loosened. Very few fighters, whether chivalric or fencing, wear custom fitted sports mouth guards. Dental accidents can also happen to bystanders where a fall can knock out a tooth just as easily as a hit during a tournament. So what would you do in the scenario above?

The first thing to do is to act calmly and calm the patient, just like any other call. Put on gloves, obtain consent for treatment, and start paperwork. If the tooth is missing and is not in the oral cavity, look on the ground or in the helm for the tooth. Ask the patient if he thought he swallowed the tooth. Once you find the tooth, check its condition. Does it look whole and have all its roots? How clean is it? If the tooth is dirty, do not scrub the tooth. This is extremely important. Rinse the tooth off in milk, saline, or water. Do not scrub the tooth. There are important cells and tissues that will still be attached to the avulsed (knocked out) tooth that are

vital for the tooth to reattach to the bone when re-implanted. Next, help to control the bleeding. Many times the lip will be lacerated or the nose will be bleeding after an accident like this. Control that bleeding as well. Put some gauze (2x2 size is perfect) folded into a square over the bleeding socket and have the patient bite to control the bleeding. While the patient is doing this, you can rinse off the tooth (remember, only rinse gently) and find a container (clean) for the tooth. Place the tooth in milk or saline and make sure the patient takes it with them to the hospital. The patient needs to see a dentist within 90 minutes of the tooth being knocked out or they will lose the tooth. Most major hospitals will have an oral maxillofacial surgeon who can re-implant this tooth when they get to the hospital. Any general dentist can also do this. A kit can be ordered from your local dentist that has pre-made solution and container to carry the tooth to the dentist. It's called Save-A-Tooth and is a great addition to your kit.

If the patient cannot make it to a dentist or hospital within 90 minutes, it is within the scope of first aid to re-implant the tooth. Make sure the tooth is rinsed of visible dirt, debris, etc. Gently hold the tooth with two fingers and place the tooth in the socket. There will be discomfort, so advise the patient before you replace the tooth. Push the tooth gently into place and caution the patient not to disturb the tooth. The patient must still see the dentist as soon as possible to stabilize the tooth.

Sometimes the tooth is only partially knocked out or loosened. Obviously, do not pull it the rest of the way out. First aid in this situation is to gently reposition the tooth. This will be uncomfortable for the patient, so inform them what you are doing. Most dentists would rather see the tooth put gently back in place as closely as possible rather than have it dangling two hours later. Bleeding will likely be present, so help to control that as well by using a gauze bandage and pressure. Highly encourage the patient to go to the hospital or see a dentist as soon as possible (within 90 minutes



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preferably.) Caution the patient not to eat or drink until they see the dentist so they don't disturb the tooth further.

Custom fitted sports mouth guards or football-type mouth guards will prevent most of these injuries. However, chirurgeons and marshals cannot prevent a fighter from fighting because they don't have a mouth guard. Encourage your local fighters to wear a mouth guard.

Most other dentally related calls are fairly mild. Occasionally folks will have fillings that come out or will have a toothache. When a filling comes out, recommend that they can get a temporary filling material at most drug stores that can cover the hole or they can wait to see their dentist when they get home. Toothaches (especially if they are swollen) need to be referred directly to a dentist or ER for antibiotics. Swellings in the gum should also be treated like a toothache. Remember that the teeth and gums are located very close to the brain and any infections in them should be handled with care.

The topics included in this article should cover the dental emergencies chirurgeons may face at events. If there are further questions, please contact the author at the contact information below or talk to your local dentist.

### About the Author

Lady Genevieve del Gamba is a 12<sup>th</sup> Century Norman woman who has a morbid and unseemly fascination with other peoples' teeth. She is a Journeyman Chirurgeon, Master Waterbearer, ER Deputy Kingdom Chirurgeon and Kingdom Waterbearer. She is an apprentice/protégé to Mistress Xene Theirane, OL, OP. In her free time she enjoys the gentle pursuits of embroidery, cooking, archery, and hunting.

Dr. Susan Delk is a general dentist practicing in the small town of Brady, Texas. Besides SCA activities, she

enjoys volunteering, reading, cooking, and hunting with her husband Kevin and three German Shorthaired Pointers, Zeus, Rose and Lucky. She can be contacted at [ladydds@verizon.net](mailto:ladydds@verizon.net).

### **Field Chirurgy tip:**

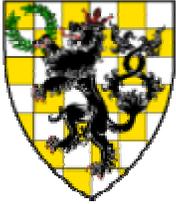
A fighter's helmet and shield make a great wedge to help elevate a shocky patient's feet.

### **What is - and is not - a Chirurgeon**

Greetings, all, in this the Fortieth Year of our society! I hope all is well and that as few as possible of you need our services this tourney season. In case you should need us, let me tell you how to find us: The easy part is the red baldric and banner with a fleam (it looks like an upside down 2) on them... but there's more to a chirurgeon than that! Read on:



Anyone may use their first aid training when needed. However, that doesn't make them chirurgeons. A chirurgeon is a warranted officer who has current first aid, CPR, and membership cards, has passed an apprenticeship, and is on the Kingdom warrant roster. Warrants come only from the Kingdom Chirurgeon, with the approval of the Crown. Every warranted chirurgeon is listed on our website [www.chirurgeon.wastekeep.org](http://www.chirurgeon.wastekeep.org) under the alphabetic roster. Those whose warrants have lapsed are in red and labeled. A lapsed warrant is easily fixed, these people



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just need to contact me with the stuff I need to have on file to activate their warrants.

On our website there is also a list of "chirurgeon contacts" by branch. These are people who presumably have been asked by their branches to be chirurgeons, but there are a lot of names on branch websites that are not on the warrant roster.

Only those with current warrant authorization cards are chirurgeons and only they may call themselves chirurgeons. This is important, because chirurgeons are SCA officers (that the SCA and its insurance is liable for) and "at large", with warrants that are accepted throughout the Known World. It matters for our insurance, and for the organization that lets us know that every warranted chirurgeon has passed their apprenticeship and we can prove they have current membership and certifications on file with us.

I think it's wonderful for branches to have branch chirurgeons - it's nice knowing you've got someone around who's willing to help. In order to be a branch chirurgeon, that person must first be a warranted chirurgeon, and then the branch officers must approve and submit a change of officer form to the Kingdom Chirurgeon. Many thanks are due to those branches who have verified warrants and sent change of officer forms to me!

For the branches who have designated first aiders listed as chirurgeons, I and the other chirurgeons stand ready to help these folks become warranted chirurgeons - but until they get their card from me, please don't call them chirurgeons - they aren't! Chirurgeons have an authorization card and wear the chirurgeon badge - I know, because I'm making sure of it by sending a badge to each chirurgeon with a current warrant. I have a lot of badges waiting for lapsed and new chirurgeons too, and look forward to working with first aid volunteers and branches to help them become chirurgeons!

Thanks very much for your attention, and your willingness to serve the well-being of our populace!

v' gosudar' delo (in the sovereign's service)  
Tvorimir Danilov, MC  
Kingdom Chirurgeon, An Tir

### Field Chirurgy tip:

A fighter and his shield make a nice sunshade. Several fighters and shields make instant crowd control.

### Building a Chirurgeon Banner

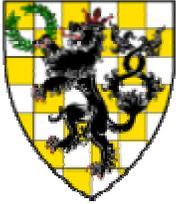


Even people (like me) who can't sew well can make a really good-looking banner, if they're careful. I learned this technique from Aquaterra's banner people, and am really happy I don't have to do

anything complicated with appliqué and all that! Read on:

This technique will work with any fabric that you can sew in 2 layers on your machine and isn't too stretchy. "SilkEssence" looks best in the air (in my opinion.) One warning with it: **pin everything**. You can't have too many pins in this stuff, it's slippery.

Supplies: 1 yard red fabric, ½ yard white . White thread. A sewing machine that can adjust for varying widths of zigzag stitching. Very sharp-pointed **little** scissors, normal sharp scissors, or rotary cutter and mat. A paper bag or other paper to draw templates on for the



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goutte (teardrop) and fleam. Scissors fit for cutting it (**don't** use those sewing scissors, or I can't be answerable for where you sleep!). Ruler, big "2" stencil from office/craft supply store. If you trust your (or a buddy's) drawing you can do that – but don't get too artsy with the fleam – it's the biggest way to bite off more than you can chew! Some big round object such as mixing bowl to help draw the goutte. Pencil or fabric marker.

Choice time: are you going to make one 34"x 38" banner, or two 20"x 29" banners? With two you can have one at Point and one in your campsite! Decide, and if you want two, cut the red in half (pay attention, you want the halves wide not long – fold so the finished edges are together and cut down the middle between them.) Cut the white in two the same way whether or not you want two banners, or you'll have an anorexic goutte.

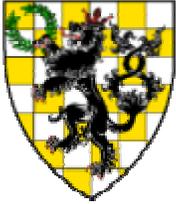
You now have a red rectangle 36"x 45" or (2) 22"x 36". Put hems on that, by folding in the edge of the red fabric as wide as your sewing machine foot. Stitch that down with a normal zigzag to keep it from getting any bad ideas. Go all the way around, being careful to fold in corners cleanly, then do it again without zigzag for a normal straight line stitch where it shows.

When you've hemmed all 4 sides, make a sleeve (tube) for the pole to go through. The rectangle is going to be taller than wide, so look at the two short sides that will be top or bottom and pick the corners you're less happy with to be the ones you fold down in back to make your sleeve. Think about what you're using for a pole and make lots of space for it – don't say "I've got a 2" pole so I'll make a 4" sleeve" – test it by pinning the fabric. How much space do you really need? When it works (and it's the same width all across the fabric), sew a line across to attach the hem to the fabric where you pinned it. Stitch it well at the edges, they'll take the most abuse.

Now it's time to work on your white 22"x 18" rectangle. First, make patterns you like. Cut the paper bag so you have paper that's 20" tall by 16" wide. Draw a line down the center, 8" on each side of it. Now go raid the mixing bowls (or other **big** round clean things with defined edges.) Find the one with the size you like (remember you have to fit your fleam inside the space you choose, so go with the **biggest** that'll fit on the paper), and put it in the bottom of the paper, centered. Draw the outline of the bowl. Put the bowls away. Get the ruler and draw a triangle with corners at top center and the same height on the circle about ¼ of the way down from the top. This is your reference line. Now mess around with the point of your goutte until you like it. A **little** wave to it can look nice – see what you like, move it up and down, etc. Try a sharp point at the top, I think it looks better. Don't get curvy, you'll have to cut that line between layers later. Cut it out when you like it.

Now the hard part. Take that stencil or a drawing of a fleam and decide if it's big enough to fill that bowl area. If not, enlarge with photocopier till it's what the heralds call "big and butch" (try an inch thick and a full sheet of paper or bigger, like 10" x 15".) Draw around the outside of your fleam pattern and stare at it. If it doesn't work visually, mess with it. Remember to put in a circle for the hinge at the midpoint of the fleam- a pop lid or marker cap or such should work for a stencil. Cut your fleam and look at it on the goutte. Like it? Put it on the paper, being careful to center it low in the goutte, not midway up. Check to make sure you don't have the fleam pointing the wrong way! Trace it when you've got it right.

Take your (hopefully) final version, and put the paper on the red fabric and pretend it's white. Does it work? Remember, you'll lose some of the edges when you work – that's why the paper started smaller than the white fabric. If it looks like the proportions work, cut out your fleam **on the paper**. Now you have a paper teardrop that's got a fleam-hole in the center. Notice I



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haven't said a word about cutting fabric yet? That's why this technique is so great!

Put the white rectangle on the red rectangle and make sure it's centered. Take your time. Then pin it around the edges and across the open space. Remember what I said about the SilkEssence? **lots** of pins, I put them at 4" intervals across the open space in the white. Put your paper pattern on the white, and make sure **it** is centered. The centerline on it helps, right? Don't actually center the goutte top to bottom on the banner – you need space for a pole across the top and it looks best when the circle is about as far from the bottom as it is from the edges. Now draw your outlines (remember to do the fleam too) with pencil or a fabric marker. No pen, you'll regret it.

Still no cutting. Load the white thread in the sewing machine (bobbin too!) if you haven't already, and test on a scrap of fabric till you have a **narrow** and **short** (skinny zigzags really close together) zigzag. This is not a race. Run the machine as slow as you want. When it starts going too fast for you to feel comfortable, stop and start again with lighter foot on the pedal. Stitch over your line all around the goutte. Start and stop at the point. After using that to warm up, move the fabric and start in one tip of the fleam. Go all the way around, and go around in a circle at the "hinge" in the middle before you keep going. At the sharp corners lift the sewing machine foot and turn the fabric, being sure you put the foot back down on top of your other stitching so you don't have a place it'll pull apart.

Now we get to cutting. This is the time to be *\*really\** careful. Start with the white fabric outside the goutte and trim it really close to the stitching. That was warm-up. Next, carefully separate the red and white layers inside the goutte, and snip a hole through the red being sure you're not going to cut the white. Cut around the inside of the goutte and the outside of the fleam stitching, removing the red as close to the stitching as you safely can. Be **very** careful not to cut the white fabric by accident, always be sure what's between the

scissor blades! Finally, and hardest, cut the white out of the inside of the fleam. Use really good lighting, don't do it when you're tired, etc. This is where I had trouble my first one- I snipped through the red too. Don't hurry or you'll blow it. (If you blow it, Fray Check and some careful mending will help, as will iron-on fabric mending tape, but if you pull that too tight the banner will bunch there.)

Once you survive the cutting, stitch over all your skinny zigzags with **wide short** zigzags to cover the fabric bits you left at the edges of the skinny ones. Huzzah! You're done! Hang it with pride.

### Kingdom Reporting Dates:

#### First Quarter:

*Months including February, March, April*  
Report Due To Principality Officer By May 15th  
Report Due To Kingdom Chirurgeon By May 31st

#### Second Quarter:

*Months including May, June, July*  
Report Due To Principality Officer By August 15th  
Report Due To Kingdom Chirurgeon By August 25th

#### Third Quarter:

*Months including August, September, October*  
Report Due To Principality Officer By November 15th  
Report Due To Kingdom Chirurgeon By November 30th

#### Fourth Quarter:

*Months including November, December, January*  
Report Due To Principality Officer By February 15th  
Report Due To Kingdom Chirurgeon By February 28th